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ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By Marie T. Michaud

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of Jean Jacques Rousseau's thoughts on the problems of war and peace in international relations.

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INTRODUCTION

In this essay I will examine the thought of the eighteenth century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. I will focus in particular on his work on international relations. As political scientist Stanley Hoffman has pointed out, Rousseau's thoughts on international relations have been historically neglected and misunderstood.[1] Three interrelated factors have contributed much to the neglect and the misunderstandings. First, Rousseau's writings on international relations are a fragmented collection. While some writings are completed essays others are incomplete fragments and still others are small sections contained within larger works. Second, many Rousseau scholars have been confused by a writing style in which Rousseau has tended towards grand statements and sweeping principles qualified in the body of his work. Although Rousseau's work cannot be understood from these grand statements alone they have been extracted from his work and used to justify many conflicting interpretations of his thought. A third factor that has created problems for scholars is the fact that Rousseau's writings on international relations cannot be understood adequately in isolation from his overall thought. There is an essential unity to all of Rousseau's work. It is governed by a few overriding principles, principles which *must* be understood and taken into account when examining his shorter fragments. Each individual book or fragment must be examined as part of the larger whole.

Rousseau's understanding of international relations flowed from his conception of human nature, the internal structure of the state, and the anarchical structure of the international system. To categorize Rousseau as a first, second or third image writer under the classification system originated by Kenneth Walz in his book *Man, The State and War* would be to seriously misunderstand Rousseau's work. Neither can Rousseau be understood by categorizing him as either a pessimist or an optimist. To attempt such a

1. S. Hoffman, 'Introduction,' in *Rousseau on International Relations*, ed. S. Hoffman & D.Fidler (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. xi

categorization is to narrow and distort the rich complexity of Rousseau's work. It is this very complexity that makes Rousseau's work both difficult to grasp and still relevant in the contemporary world.

In order to grasp the complexities of Rousseau's work I will begin by examining his conception of human nature as it is found in his various works particularly in his second discourse, *The Discourse on Inequality*, and in his treatise on education, *Emile*. I will then use his conception of human nature to understand his writing on the civil state as he described it particularly in his first and second version of the *Social Contract*, his *Discourse on Political Economy*, and his *Considerations on the Government of Poland*. Finally, in light of Rousseau's conception of human nature and the civil state I will examine the work he did specifically on the international system. This work is found in his fragments on war and in his *Summary* and *Critique* of Saint-Pierre's project for perpetual peace.

-I-

HUMAN NATURE

When Rousseau developed his conception of human nature he did not limit himself to characteristics he saw exhibited in social man. Instead he envisioned a hypothetical state of nature in which each man lived simply, isolated from his fellows and free from the temptations of social man. The natural man that Rousseau imagined was, more than anything else, an innocent creature of potentialities. He was good in that he did not know of evil. He was peaceful in that he was undisturbed by the passions rocking social man. Rousseau looked to this natural man in order to determine the real nature of man.

This natural man was completely independent; he possessed no inherent drive to community, no instincts pushing him toward civil society. Although he did possess a natural empathy, it was insufficient to lead him into interdependence; animals, Rousseau noted, also possess empathy. Instead Rousseau attributed the establishment of civil society to the two characteristics of man that he saw as differentiating man from other animals: man's perfectibility and his freedom from the dictates of instinct. Rousseau saw man's perfectibility as making him capable of improvement (or corruption) both as an individual and as a species. He saw man's freedom as allowing him to "will what is for [his] own good, or what [he] esteems as such."[2] Rousseau argued that it was these two defining characteristics that have led man towards both virtue and vice as they have enabled man to develop both passion and reason.

Rousseau believed that it is not possible to separate man's passion from his reason. He believed that they developed intertwined and they will remain inseparable. Man will never be a creature governed by reason or by passion alone. In his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Rousseau wrote:

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2 Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. B. Foxley (Great Britian: Dent: London and Melbourne, 1986), p. 243.

> It is by the activity of our passion, that our reason improves; we covet knowledge merely because we covet enjoyment, and it is impossible to conceive, why a man exempt from fears and desires should take the trouble to reason ... The passions, in their turn, owe their origin to our needs, and their increase to our progress in science; for we cannot desire or fear anything, but in consequence of the ideas we have of it.[3]

Rousseau argued that it is this combination of passion and reason that has led man from the state of nature into interdependence. Man's developing reason has unleashed a multitude of new passions, new passions which solidified into needs which could only be satisfied with the cooperation of other men. Thus, Rousseau argued, mankind changed, developed new passions, artificial needs, and moved into interdependence.

However Rousseau's understanding of man's real nature was more complex yet. Just as Rousseau used reason to peel away the artificial characteristics of social man in his search for man's true nature, he also used reason to look beyond the physical and independent man of the state of nature. He looked beyond both the corrupted social man and the simple natural man to envision the enlightened social and moral being that he believed man had the potential to become. In envisioning this social and moral being Rousseau neither underestimated the strength of man's passions nor glorified man's reason. Instead he argued that man's nature cannot be understood in a physical sense alone.

Rousseau believed that man's nature has both a physical and a spiritual aspect. He described the physical aspect of man's nature as the sum of his senses and portrayed man's passions as the voice of his body.[4] However, he argued, whereas an animal is nothing more than an ingenious machine "to which nature has given senses to wind itself up,"[5] man in his liberty to disregard instinct and make choices is more than an animal; man is more than the sum of his senses. Rousseau believed that man has a soul which is separate from his senses and a conscience which Rousseau described as the voice of man's soul.[6]

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3 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Inequality,' in *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, tran. & ed. by L. Crocker (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), p. 204.
4 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 249.
5 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Inequality', *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 186.
6 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 249.

Only the promise of this spirituality, a sort of embryonic conscience, is apparent in Rousseau's natural man. Rousseau argued that the "man who has made no comparisons and has seen no relationships has no conscience."[7] Conscience must be developed and made active. Rousseau saw natural man as truly human only in his potential. But as natural man evolves, as he leaves the innocence of the state of nature and develops the multitude of powerful new passions to tempt him, his emerging reason not only enables him to gratify these passions, it also enables him to perceive the good. Natural man has no knowledge of the good because knowledge of the good, Rousseau noted, "is not innate in man".[8] Man only learns to know the good through the development of his reason. However "reason alone," Rousseau argued, "is not a sufficient foundation for virtue."[9] He pointed out:

> If natural law were inscribed solely in human reason, it would scarcely be capable of guiding the bulk of our actions. But it is also indelibly engraved in the human heart; and it is there that it speaks to man more powerfully than all the precepts of philosophers.[10]

As soon as man's "reason leads him to perceive it [the good]", Rousseau argued, "his conscience impels him to love it."[11] Rousseau viewed man's conscience as a feeling, an innate love for the good and hatred of evil.[12] He called it man's divine instinct,[13] and he believed that it was this instinct that gave man the potential to become social. Rousseau wrote:

> Again, if, as it is impossible to doubt, man is by nature sociable, or at least fitted to become sociable, he can only be so by means of other innate feelings [the voice of conscience], relative to his kind; for if only physical well-being were considered, men would certainly be scattered rather than brought together.[14]

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7 Rousseau, 'Letter to Christophe de Beaumont,' *The Indispensable Rousseau*, ed. & trans. J.H. Mason (London: Quartet Books, 1979) p. 232.
8 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 253.
9 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 255.
10 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, ed. S. Hoffman & D.Fidler, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 34.
11 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 253.
12 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 253.
13 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 254.
14 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 253.

Although it is not man's conscience, the spiritual element of his nature, that has dictated who man has become, a social being ruled by artificial passions, it is this spiritual element that continues to dictate who man can and ought to become. Man has the freedom to act on the good or to disregard it. Man is "tempted by [his] passions," Rousseau wrote, "and restrained by [his] conscience".[15] The man who follows his conscience, Rousseau noted, "is following nature".[16] The man who follows his passions is a slave.

Natural man needed only to follow the physical aspect of his nature. He was no more than "a stupid, limited animal".[17] He was a man only in his potential. But man in society cannot remain true to the physical and independent aspect of his nature. To become a man in the truest sense of the word, to fulfill his real nature, man must learn to follow his conscience. He must seek the good, virtue, because it is virtue, not animal simplicity nor vice, that is in accordance with his true nature. Rousseau believed passionately that man is by nature morally good[18] and that his "vices belong not so much to man in himself, as to man in a state of society ill-governed".[19]

Thus Rousseau did not view man's entry into a state of interdependence as an unhappy accident. He saw it as an essential part or rather a necessary condition of man's progress. Rousseau did believe in progress. When he envisioned man as a creature defined by his potentialities, he envisioned a creature destined to progress. Only in society, Rousseau wrote, can man develop "his most excellent faculties."[20] However, in order to develop these "excellent faculties," to find virtue, man must find a way to reconcile the physical and independent aspect of his nature with the spiritual aspect.

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15. Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 244.
16. Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 250.
17. Rousseau, 'First Version of the Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, ed. S. Hoffman & D Fidler, trans. by J. R. Masters (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), tran. J.R. Masters, p. 113.
18. Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 250-252.
19. Rousseau, 'Preface to Narcissus, or The Self-Admirer', *Miscellaneous Works of J.J. Rousseau*, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972) II, 139.
20. Rousseau, 'First Version of the Social Contract', *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 104.

Although Rousseau saw within the spiritual aspect of man's nature the potential to become a social and moral being Rousseau never forgot that man would always retain the physical and independent aspect of his nature. Rousseau not only saw man as having the ability to progress, he saw man as having the freedom to choose corruption over progress.

-II-

HUMAN PASSIONS

Rousseau believed that man's only original passion was self-love.[21] This passion acted as natural man's chief means of self-preservation by dictating that he love himself above everything else and thus love what will contribute to his preservation.[22] Rousseau argued that this self-love of natural man, amour de soi, "is in itself indifferent either to good or evil; that it becomes good or evil only by accident, and according to the circumstances in which it is developed."[23] Rousseau argued that man's amour de soi was transformed into selfishness, amour-propre, with interdependence.

As man moved into interdependence he began to have more contact with other men; he began to compare himself with the others,[24] to seek the approval of the others and finally, to measure his own worth relative to the others. Rousseau noted that while the "savage lives within himself", social man lives "in the opinion of others."[25] Social man "derives the consciousness of his own existence" from the judgment of these others.[26] Thus interdependence led man into a situation where:

> all men seek their happiness in appearance. No one cares for reality, everyone stakes his essence on illusion. Slaves and dupes of their self-love, men live not in order to live but to make others believe that they have lived.[27]

Man's original self-love, transformed by interdependence, became the basis for anger, pride, vanity, resentment, revenge, etc. Property became the main basis of comparison between men and while the inequality of natural man was set by nature, the inequality of

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21 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 173.
22 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 174.
23 Rousseau, 'Letter to Christophe de Beaumont,' *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p. 232.
24 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 174.
25 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Inequality,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 245.
26 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Inequality,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 245.
27 Rousseau, as quoted in E. Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. & tran. by P. Gay (Binghamton, N.Y.: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 51.

social man has become boundless -- "he who has much wants to have it all".[28] Rousseau saw this transformation of self-love as having led men into a de facto state of war where:

> an insatiable ambition, the rage of raising their relative fortunes, not so much through real necessity as to overtop others, inspires all men with a wicked inclination to injure each other.[29]

To escape from this escalating state of war, Rousseau argued, man chose to form a civil state.

Rousseau believed that man's passion is tangled inextricably with his reason and he believed that man's passion dominates this tangle. Rousseau viewed man's passions as the irresistible force behind man's actions. His analysis of man and the social state was pervaded by this conviction. He saw man's reason as enabling man to enter into a civil state and man's passions as leading him into an unjust state.

As man's reason has developed, Rousseau noted, so has his conscience, yet rather than becoming man's guide, his conscience has become part of the tangle dominated by passion. Although man's reason can and should be put to the service of his conscience, Rousseau argued, reason has more often acted as the servant of man's passions.

Rousseau believed that when man left the state of nature and began to develop the ability to reason he also began to perceive the laws of justice, natural law. "There is a universal justice", Rousseau noted, "emanating from reason alone."[30] And without doubt, Rousseau added, once man discovers the laws of justice, conscience leads him to love them.[31] But this knowledge and love of justice has not brought man to act justly, rather it has placed man in contradiction within himself. The clamor of his artificial passions has drowned out the cries of his conscience. Man has continued to follow his artificial and selfish passions. He has become "tormented, at war with himself" because while his natural feelings, his conscience, speaks of the common interest, as soon as his interest is

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28. Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 46.
29. Rousseau, 'Discourse on Inequality,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, pg. 224.
30. Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' in *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, tran. & ed. by L. Crocker (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), p. 38.
31. Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 253.

involved his reason still speaks of self.[32] In his *Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre* Rousseau noted:

> The heart of man is always right concerning that which has no personal relation to himself. In the quarrels at which we are purely spectators, we immediately take the side of justice, and there is no act of viciousness which does not give us a lively sentiment of indignation so long as we receive no profit from it. But when our interest is involved, our sentiments are soon corrupted. And it is only then that we prefer the evil which is useful to us to the good that nature makes us love.[33]

When man chooses to disregard his conscience and thus allows himself to be ruled by vice, Rousseau argued, man lives as a slave to his selfish passions and to his apparant interests. As long as man's reason continues to serve his selfish passions, Rousseau argued, man's torment will continue. He lives in contradiction with his true nature and his true interests as a social and moral being. "There is no slave but the evil-doer" Rousseau wrote, "for he always does evil against his will".[34] Instead of following the internal dictates of his conscience he follows the external dictates of his senses. When Rousseau criticized man's progress he was criticizing the use man had made of his reason rather than man's exit from the state of nature. When Voltaire read Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* he wrote to Rousseau:

> I have received your new book against the human race ... Never has so much talent been used to want to make us into animals; you make one want to walk on all fours...[35]

Rousseau responded in an answer to Voltaire:

> Let us look for the first sources of the disorders of society; we will find that all the evils of men come to them more from error than ignorance, and that what we don't know harms us a lot less than what we think we know.[36]

Rousseau believed that the judgments of reason must be based on conscience and only then will reason lead man to attain the moral goodness that is in accordance with his

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32 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 255.
33 Rousseau, 'Letter to M. D'Alembert on the Theatre,' *Politics and the Arts*, tran. A. Bloom (Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960) p. 24.
34 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 437.
35 Voltaire as quoted in *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p. 68.
36 Rousseau, 'Letter to Voltaire (10 September 1755)' *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p. 68.

nature.

Rousseau did not believe that man's passions could ever be eradicated. He believed that they form as much a part of man as does his conscience, man is formed as much by the physical aspect of his nature as by the spiritual aspect of his nature. Thus man's passions will continue to tempt him. Conscience does not forbid man to be tempted, Rousseau noted, "but to yield to temptation."[37] Whether or not we feel a passion, he added, "is beyond our control."[38] Thus the only resolution to the contradictions tormenting social man is self-control. The virtuous man, Rousseau wrote, is the man "who can conquer his affections; for then he follows his reason, his conscience."[39] Rousseau speculated on whether this self-control was possible. He wrote:

> I not only believe that [the vices] perish with the body that gives them birth, but I think, beyond all doubt, that a longer life would be sufficient to reform mankind, and that many ages of youth would teach us that nothing is preferable to virtue.[40]

The word virtue, Rousseau noted "is derived from a word signifying strength, and strength is the foundation of all virtue."[41] Man must struggle against his independent and physical nature and gain the strength to rule over himself. Rousseau argued that natural man, "would have lived in greater happiness" but, "being able to follow his inclinations without a struggle there would have been no merit in his goodness, he would not have been virtuous, as he may be now."[42]

Social man needs binding laws to give him the strength to struggle against himself, to struggle against his corrupted self-love and control his passions. Rousseau believed that social man's corrupted self-love, his need to be first, continually works against equality and thus continually works to enslave him since without equality there can be no liberty. Liberty, Rousseau noted:

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37 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 409.
38 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 409.
39 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 408.
40 Rousseau, 'Julie,' *The Living Thoughts of Rousseau*, ed. R. Rolland, (London: Cassell and Company, 1946), p. 124.
41 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 408.
42 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 437.

> consists less in doing your will than in not being submitted to the will of another; it consists further in not subjecting another's will to our own. Whoever is master cannot be free and to reign is to obey.[43]

Only binding laws can re-establish the equality man lost as he became interdependent and thus help enable man to be free.

Laws not only re-establish man's equality, they enable man to serve the common interest while still following his own self-interest. Just as man's original self-love was transformed into selfishness as man became interdependent, it can be transformed again. "Extend self-love to others," Rousseau wrote "and it is transformed into virtue."[44] But even transformed to virtue, Rousseau added, man's self-love will continue to dictate that he avoid doing anything that does not serve self. Therefore man cannot listen to the voice of his conscience until it serves self, and for conscience to serve self justice must be reciprocal. Once justice is reciprocal man's true interest will be in being just. Conscience is thus moved by man's twofold relationship, his relationship to himself, and his relationship to his fellowmen.[45]

> It is to law alone that men owe justice and liberty. This salutary organ of the general will reestablishes in civil right natural equality of mankind. This celestial voice dictates to every citizen the precepts of public reason, teaching him to act according to the maxims of his own understanding and not to behave in contradiction with himself.[46]

Rousseau argued that justice will not be reciprocal until laws are enforced by a sanction because there will never be a society of perfect men. Rousseau wrote, natural law brings only "good to the wicked and evil to the just."[47] Thus without a sanction the laws of justice that emanate from reason will be inoperative.[48] Until man is living in a just state with laws enforced by a coercive body the rules of justice will not be to his

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43 Rousseau, 'Letters From the Mountain, Eighth Letter,' *The indispensable Rousseau*, p. 246.
44 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 215.
45 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 253.
46 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 7.
47 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 38.
48 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 38.

advantage nor to his security.[49]

In the *First Version of the Social Contract* Rousseau gave the reasoning of one man deciding whether to obey laws of justice in the absence of a coercive body to enforce them:

> Everything you tell me about the advantages of the social law would be fine if while I were scrupulously observing it toward others, I were sure that all of them would observe it toward me. But what assurance of this can you give me, and could there be a worse situation for me than to be exposed to all the ills that stronger men would want to cause me without my daring to make up for it against the weak? Either give me guarantees against all unjust undertakings or do not expect me to refrain from them in turn.[50]

Therefore Rousseau believed that laws must be enforced before justice is possible.

On the path toward the reconciliation of the two disparate elements of man's nature, the physical and the spiritual elements, man must enter into a civil state with legislation enforced by a coercive body. However newly interdependent man entered into an unjust civil state based on power and deceit. In this civil state laws were external restraints imposed upon some men by other men. Rousseau pointed out that "under the name of law you have everywhere seen the rule of self-interest and human passion."[51]

> In Europe, the government, laws, customs, self-interest, all lay individuals under the constant necessity of reciprocally deceiving each other; everything contributes to make vice a duty; it is necessary they should be wicked, in order to be wise; for there cannot be a greater folly than to promote the happiness of bad men at the expence of one's own.[52]

These civil societies possessed no real common-interest, only a collection of opposing self-interests. "One man's happiness," Rousseau lamented, "is the other's misfortune."[53] Rousseau saw these unjust civil societies all around him and he found the source of the evil, not in man himself, but in social man badly governed.[54]

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49 Rousseau, 'First version of The Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 106.
50 Rousseau, 'First Version of the Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 106.
51 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 437.
52 Rousseau, 'Preface to Narcissus,' *Miscellaneous Works of J.J. Rousseau*, p. 140.
53 Rousseau, 'First version of The Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 103.
54 Rousseau, 'Preface to Narcissus,' *Miscellaneous Works of J.J. Rousseau*, p. 139.

-III-

THE IDEAL STATE

Rousseau described a law-governed civil state in which man could obtain justice and live according to his true nature in his two versions of *The Social Contract*. He portrayed this civil state as an ideal, an ideal which man could use to criticize his current civil state and, even more importantly, an ideal which man could strive toward. Rousseau believed that only in striving toward this ideal state would man be moving to realize his true nature and find virtue.

Rousseau argued that a just civil state would be formed through a social contract in which each man alienates all his rights to the community. In "giving himself to all," Rousseau argued, each man "gives himself to nobody ... as there is not one associate over whom we do not acquire the same rights which we concede to him over ourselves."[55] Thus man would retain his freedom albeit in a different form. Whereas in the state of nature man was free in the physical sense in which he was limited only by his own power as an individual, in the ideal state man would be free in the civil sense in which he is limited only by the common interest as manifested in the laws of the state, and in the moral sense in which he is limited only by his "obedience to a self-prescribed law."[56]

Rousseau captured the essence of the social contract in this paragraph:

> Each of us puts in common his person and his whole power under the supreme direction of the general will; and in return we receive every member as an indivisible part of the whole.[57]

The social contract would produce a moral and collective body. It is formed out of man's common interest and it is only in regard to this common interest that man should be governed. Rousseau called the will that would come out of this common interest the

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55 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 18.
56 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 23.
57 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 18-19.

general will and argued that it alone could "direct the forces of the State according to the ... common good."[58] All laws, Rousseau noted, would be acts of the general will. He defined the general will in each man as "a pure act of the understanding, which reasons in the silence of the passions about what man can demand of his fellow man and what his fellow man has the right to demand of him."[59] Through the general will each man can do what is best for himself within society. As I pointed out earlier, Rousseau believed that man could only ever be expected to do what was best for himself. He argued that the "equality of rights and the notion of justice that [the general will] produces are derived from the preference which each gives to himself, and consequently from man's nature."[60] He added that the general will is thus "an admirable union of interest and justice."[61] It is only because the general will is a union of interest and justice that it is not a utopic ideal.

Rousseau did not believe that the nation had to be assembled in order to determine the general will. He pointed out:

> [T]he general will is always for the side which is most favorable to the public interest, that is, for the most equitable; so that they [the government] only have to act justly to be certain of following the general will.[62]

However Rousseau believed that each individual man would always retain a particular will which is different from the general will he has as a citizen, and this particular will tend to lead him to try to "enjoy the rights of a citizen without being willing to fulfill the duties of a subject."[63] It is this particular will, Rousseau noted in the *Social Contract*, that will work toward the degeneration of each government.[64] Because of this particular will, Rousseau concluded, "whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the whole body; which means nothing else than that he shall be

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58 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 27.
59 Rousseau, 'First Version of The Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 107.
60 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 33.
61 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 34.
62 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy', *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 10
63 Rousseau, 'Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 21.
64 Rousseau, 'Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 89.

forced to be free."[65] By this Rousseau meant that the law, created and consented to by each citizen as part of the general will, must be enforced by a coercive body. Man is only free when he follows laws he has freely consented to. When he is led by his selfish passions to ignore such laws and follow his particular will he is not free, rather he is a slave to those selfish passions and thus lives in contradiction within himself. Furthermore, Rousseau added, if some men can disobey the laws dictated by the general will, reason will lead other men to disobey them. Each man must not only consent to follow the laws, he must know that all others will also follow the laws; only then can reason serve man's conscience rather than his selfish passions.

65 Rousseau, 'Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 22.

-IV-

THE INTERNATIONAL STATE OF NATURE

Rousseau believed that it is imperative man strive toward the creation of an ideal state. He also believed that man must strive toward reform in the international system of states. Just as it is only within an ideal state that man can move towards his true nature and virtue, it is only within a reformed international system that man has any hope of achieving and maintaining an ideal civil state.

In *The State of War* Rousseau compared the civil state to natural man and pronounced them very different. He pointed out that while the state is an artificial body, man is the work of nature. However his conception of the civil state is very similar to his conception of social man. Just as social man is dependent on other men, the civil state has become dependent on other states. This dependence had led to a situation where civil states, like social men, measure their worth and attained their happiness by comparing themselves to others. The civil state, like social man, is an artificial entity possessing only a relative measure. While the social man "derives the consciousness of his own existence from the judgment of other men"[66] the civil state is also "forced to compare itself in order to know itself."[67]

The civil state, Rousseau wrote:

> [has] no fixed measure; its proper size is undefined; it can always grow bigger; it feels weak so long as there are others stronger than itself.[68]

For social man status is no better defined. The amount of wealth an individual possesses is irrelevant, as long as others have more the individual feels poor.

Furthermore, as Rousseau pointed out, it is social man who rules over the civil state.

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66 Rousseau, 'Discourse on Inequality,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 245.
67 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 38.
68 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 38.

For social man, Rousseau wrote:

> [A]bundance arouses greed; the more one gets the more one desires. He who has much wants to have it all.[69]

As kings men are driven by the same greed, the greed for wealth and power. The whole life of kings, Rousseau argued, is devoted to two objects, "to extend their rule beyond their frontiers and to make it more absolute within them."[70]

An important difference between social man and the civil state, however, is the milieu in which they exist. Rousseau noted that while social men now live as individuals in the law-governed civil state, civil states coexist in a state of nature and retain their natural liberty.[71] Each state is free to pursue its own particular interest creating a situation similar to the de facto state of war in which man lived after he became interdependent and before he entered civil society. Rousseau described the liberty in which states interact as an international state of war; he saw each state in the anarchic international system as characterized by, "a constant, overt, mutual disposition to destroy the enemy state, or at least to weaken it by all the means one can."[72] It is when this disposition becomes active, Rousseau noted, that it becomes "war properly called."[73]

Like the liberals Rousseau believed that commerce equalizes the resources of nations. He wrote:

> [C]ommerce tends more and more to establish a balance between state and state; and by depriving certain powers of the exclusive advantages they once drew from it, deprives them at the same time of one of the chief weapons they once employed for imposing their will upon the rest.[74]

But unlike the liberals Rousseau did not see commerce as eventually bringing peace. He believed that without laws interdependence, whether between individuals or states, inevitably breeds conflict. He pointed out that the European states "touch each other at so

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69 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 46.
70 Rousseau, 'Judgement of Saint-Pierre's Project,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, trans. by C.E. Vaughan, p. 90.
71 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 44.
72 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 40.
73 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 40.
74 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, trans. by C.E. Vaughan, p. 66.

many points that no one of them can move without giving a jar to all the rest; their variances are all the more deadly, as their ties are more closely woven."[75]

Rousseau added that the international law of his time did not disturb the liberty in which the civil states coexist. He noted:

> As for what is commonly called international law, because its laws lack any sanction, they are unquestionably mere illusions, even feebler than the law of nature. The latter at least speaks in the heart of individual men; whereas the decisions of international law, having no other guarantee than their usefulness to the person who submits to them, are only respected in so far as interest accords with them.[76]

The international state of war, Rousseau argued, would persist even if all the states in the international system were ideal states wishing to be just. He believed that if it is to be realized justice must be enforced at an international level as well as at a national level. He wrote:

> [I]n the absence of any sure clue to guide her, reason is bound, in every case of doubt, to obey the promptings of self-interest--which, in itself, would make war inevitable, even if all parties desired to be just.[77]

Thus, Rousseau believed that the anarchical structure of the international system leads inevitably to an international state of war. He did not see treaties or alliances as a solution to this state of war. In *Constitutional Project for Corsica* he commented that, "[a]lliances, treaties, gentlemen's agreements, such things may bind the weak to the strong, but never the strong to the weak."[78]

Rousseau also believed that the anarchical international system and the resulting international state of war make the creation and maintainance of individual ideal states impossible. He argued that with international disharmony man could never focus on perfecting his own state:

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75 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 60.
76 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' p. 45.
77 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 60.
78 Rousseau, 'Constitutional Project for Corsica,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, trans. by F. Watkins, p. 142.

> No man can have thought long upon the means of bringing any government to perfection without realizing a host of difficulties and obstacles which flow less from its inherent nature than from its relation to its neighbors. The result of this is that the care which ought to be given to its internal welfare has to be largely spent upon its outward security; and we are compelled to think more of providing for its defence against others than of making it as good as may be in itself.[79]

The partial and imperfect association that man has entered into is, according to Rousseau, "the worst state of all."[80]

> As individual men we live in a civil state subject to laws; as people we each enjoy a natural liberty: this makes our position fundamentally worse than if these distinctions were unknown. For living simultaneously in the social order and in the state of nature we are subjected to the inconveniences of both, without finding security in either.[81]

Rousseau argued that the insecurity inherent in the international state of war leads directly to war between states.

> It is quite true that it would be much better for all men to remain always at peace. But so long as there is no security for this, everyone, having no guarantee that he can avoid war is anxious to begin it at the moment which suits his own interest and so forestall a neighbour, who would no fail to forestall the attack in his turn at any moment favourable to himself, so that many wars, even offensive wars, are rather in the nature of unjust precautions for the protection of the assailant's own possessions than a device for seizing those of others.[82]

This international state of war not only leads to war between states, it also leads to domestic tyranny:

> [W]ar and conquest without and the encroachments of despotism within give each other mutual support; that money and men are habitually taken at pleasure from a people of slaves, to bring others beneath the same yoke; and that conversely war furnishes a pretext for exactions of money and another, no less plausible, for keeping large armies constantly on foot, to hold the people in awe. In a word, anyone can see that aggressive princes wage war at least as much on their subjects as on their enemies, and that the conquering nation is left no better off than the conquered.[83]

Rousseau believed that tyranny and war are "the worst scourges of humanity."[84] He found

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79 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 54.
80 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 44.
81 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 44.
82 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 79-80.
83 Rousseau, 'Judgement of Saint-Pierre's Project,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 91.
84 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 430.

it tragic that, "in joining a particular group of men," each man has really become an enemy to the rest of humanity.[85]

Therefore as Rousseau searched for a solution to the contradictions tormenting mankind he not only looked toward the establishment of the good society, he looked beyond it. He did not see the good society as viable in the anarchical international system. Rather, Rousseau believed that any real solution to mankind's problems must include a reformed international system. Just as he believed it necessary to recreate the state out of enlightened reason,[86] he believed it necessary to recreate the international system out of enlightened reason.

85 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 54.
86 By enlightened reason I mean reason informed by conscience.

-V-

A BINDING INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION

Rousseau believed that each individual's primary political responsibility should be to humanity. In his *Discourse On Political Economy* Rousseau argued, "every political society is composed of other smaller societies ... [and these] particular societies are always subordinate to those that contain them."[87] He noted that one should obey the larger society over the smaller society and he concluded that, "the duty of a man [takes priority over] that of a citizen."[88] However Rousseau cautioned that as a state grows larger each citizen, still subject to the entire authority of the laws, retains a smaller and smaller influence on the enactment of these laws.[89] Thus the larger the state grows, the less freedom each citizen retains and the greater the government's repressive power must be.[90] Furthermore, Rousseau added, men's feelings of humanity must be concentrated if they are to be active and powerful. He did not believe that these feelings of humanity could be extended beyond the nation to encompass the world. Therefore Rousseau did not believe world government could be a solution to the international state of anarchy. At one point in *Considerations on the Government of Poland* Rousseau commented "only God can govern the world."[91]

Rousseau briefly put forward the idea of autarchy as the solution to this international anarchy. Ideally Rousseau would have liked to see an international system composed of small completely independent states. However given the interdependence that already existed between the European states in the eighteenth century Rousseau understood that these states could no more move into a state of autarchy than individual men could return

87 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy', *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 3.
88 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy', *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 3.
89 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 61.
90 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 62.
91 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, trans. by F. Watkins, p. 174.

to a state of nature. When he wrote on constitutional change for Poland, for example, although he advised Poland to lessen her ties with other nations as much as possible, he also acknowledged that some treaties would remain necessary.[92] Rousseau believed that men's move into interdependence, both as individuals and as states, was permanent.

He concluded that an international confederation can be the only solution to the contradictions tearing apart individual men, the civil state, and the international system. In *Considerations on the Government of Poland* he noted that the federal system of government is "the only one which combines the advantages of large and small states."[93]

Rousseau wrote two essays specifically on an international confederation. In 1756 he wrote an essay summarizing the Abbe de Saint-Pierre's *Project for Perpetual Peace* and then, in the same year, he followed up his summary with a critique of the same work by Saint-Pierre.[94] Although these two essays, the *Summary* and the *Critique*, did not agree on all aspects of the confederation, they were complementary rather than contradictory works. In both essays Rousseau argued that an international confederation would be the best form of government for the international system. He pointed out in his *Summary* that it would be the only political arrangement capable of holding the subject, the ruler, and the foreigner equally in check.[95] What the two works did not agree on, however, was how to establish this international confederation. In his *Critique* Rousseau pointed out:

> Though the scheme itself [the international confederation] was wise enough, the means proposed for its execution betray the simplicity of the author.[96]

In this section of my thesis I will examine first the aspects of Saint Pierre's proposal that Rousseau outlines in his *Summary* and remains consistent to in his *Critique*, the details of the international confederation's political structure. I will then briefly touch on the aspects

92 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 192.
93 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 175.
94 Rousseau, 'Summary' & 'Critique' of the Abbe de Saint-Pierre's Project for Perpetual Peace in *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, trans. by G. Roosvelt. (USA:Temple University Press, 1990).
95 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 55.
96 Rousseau, 'Judgement of Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 94.

of the Saint Pierre's proposal that Rousseau criticizes in his *Critique*, the proposal's implementation. In a later section of this thesis I will examine the aspect of Saint Pierre's proposal that Rousseau criticizes in greater depth.

When Rousseau examined the idea of an international confederation he did not visualize a confederation encompassing all the states in the world. Rather, Rousseau visualized only a confederation of Europe. He saw in Europe a bond of interdependence that did not exist in the other states in the world of his time. He studied the interrelationships of the European states and drew three conclusions:

> there already exists among the nations of Europe a bond, imperfect indeed but still closer than the loose and general ties which exist between man and man in the state of nature; the second, that the imperfections of this association make the state of those who belong to it worse than it would be if they formed no community at all; the third, that these rudimentary ties, which make such an association injurious, make it at the same time readily capable of improvement ... that from the state of war which now reigns among them they might perfectly well draw an abiding peace.[97]

The international confederation that Saint Pierre proposed and Rousseau examined would cement the bonds of the European states into a genuine body politic. It would possess attributes much like Rousseau's ideal state, a legislature with the power to pass binding laws and a coercive body to enforce these laws. At the founding of any society, Rousseau noted in the *Summary*:

> some coercive power must be provided to co-ordinate the actions of its members and give to their common interests and mutual obligations that firmness and consistency which they could never acquire of themselves.[98]

In this manner men would thereafter be subject to the law both as individuals within a state and as states within the international system.[99] To maintain this the confederation would have to be a binding one; it would have to be strong enough that its members could not withdraw when their private interest clashed with the common interest of the confederation.

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97 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 67.
98 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 61.
99 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 200.

Rousseau outlined five articles that would sketch out the confederation's constitution. The first article would state that the alliance was to be "perpetual and irrevocable."[100] The contracting sovereigns would appoint delegates to a permanent diet empowered to use either arbitration or judicial pronouncement to settle all questions arising between members. The second article would establish the size and make-up of the governing assembly as well as the details by which the presidency was to be rotated and the manner in which the financial contributions of the members would be determined and collected. The third article would guarantee to all member states the continued possession and government of their lands. All anterior claims would have to be renounced and claims arising in the future would be settled by arbitration rather than force. The fourth article would set a punishment for members who break the confederation treaty. They would be named as enemies of the confederation; all other members would be obliged to "arm and take the offensive, conjointly and at the common expense" against the delinquent member until he agreed to abide by the decisions of the confederation's governing diet.[101] Finally, the fifth article would give delegates of the member states the power to frame the rules regulating state conduct for the common good of the confederation.[102]

In his *Critique* Rousseau reiterated that Saint-Pierre was correct in arguing that man's true interest is in just such a binding international confederation. He added that Saint-Pierre was also correct in arguing that if man followed his real interest he would voluntarily enter into such a confederation. However, Rousseau pointed out in his *Critique*, Saint-Pierre had neglected to distinguish between the real and the apparent in man's interests. It was at this point that Rousseau criticized the conclusions of the *Summary*. He wrote:

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100 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 60.
101 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 70.
102 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 69-70.

> Let us distinguish then, in politics as in morals, between real and apparent interest. The former could be secured by an abiding peace ... The latter is to be found in the state of absolute independence which frees sovereigns from the reign of law only to put them under that of chance.[103]

Therefore, while Rousseau believed that Saint-Pierre's plan was good in itself, he questioned whether it was as simple to implement as Saint-Pierre had believed. Rousseau did not see the princes of his time as capable of perceiving much less following their real interests.

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103 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 89-90.

-VI-

THE BOUNDS OF POSSIBILITY

In *Emile* Rousseau noted that two questions must be asked of any proposal. First, is the scheme good in itself? To be good in itself, Rousseau pointed out, "it should be adapted to the nature of things."[104] Second, can the scheme be easily put into practice? The answer to this question, Rousseau noted, "depends upon certain given conditions in particular cases," conditions that are "accidental and therefore variable."[105] Rousseau asked these two questions of both the ideal civil state and the binding international confederation.

The Civil State

Rousseau viewed both his ideal civil state and the binding international confederation as good in themselves, true to the nature of things. But did he really believe that men could come anywhere close to realizing them?

When men were newly interdependent and entered into the first civil states Rousseau argued that they were not yet capable of suppressing their selfish interests to act for the common good. In his final version of *The Social Contract* Rousseau wrote:

> in order that a newly formed nation might approve sound maxims of politics and observe the fundamental rules of state-policy, it would be necessary that ... the social spirit, which should be the work of the institution, should preside over the institution itself, and that men should be prior to the laws, what they ought to become by means of them.[106]

Therefore the first states that man entered into were not just and their laws were tailored to the selfish interests of the powerful. Man was incapable of acting for the common good, instead each man acted for himself to the detriment of the other men. At this point

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104 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 2.
105 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 2.
106 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 45.

in his argument Rousseau's pessimism and his optimism intermingle into a tangle that seems difficult to resolve. Rousseau never wavered from his belief that man's only hope of virtue is found in a law-governed civil state. At times, however, the obstacles he saw blocking the path to virtue seemed to overwhelm him. In his final version of the *Social Contract* Rousseau argued that most nations can be given good laws only when they are young and of these young nations only the minority can stand good laws. Furthermore, he argued in both the *Discourse on the Effects of Cultivating the Arts and Sciences* and the preface of *Narcissus, or The Self-Admirer*, the arts and the sciences have irreversibly corrupted society's morals.[107] Once a people has become corrupted, Rousseau lamented, they can never return to virtue. They become enslaved by their passions and self-interest. The point is, he added, "not to make those virtuous who are not such, "but to preserve those who are virtuous from becoming otherwise.[108]

However Rousseau did not believe that mankind was lost forever in irredeemable vice. Although at times his writing was touched with a profound pessimism, and he was never able to avert his eyes from the rabble of base passions dominating the interactions between men, Rousseau clung almost desperately to an underlying optimism. Rousseau's optimism was grounded in his belief that the source of man's evil was not within the natural order and therefore this evil could be expunged. In 1756 Rousseau criticized Voltaire's poem *On the Lisbon Disaster* pointing out that in the poem Voltaire basically told men "Suffer for ever, unhappy man ... it is impossible to see why you exist, if it is not to suffer and die."[109] Rousseau pointed out in his response to Voltaire that his own intention in writing about man's misery was not to illustrate to men how they must suffer forever but rather to show men "how they caused their misfortunes themselves, and consequently how they could avoid them."[110]

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107 Rousseau, 'Preface to Narcissus, or The Self-Admirer,' *The Indispensable Rousseau*.
108 Rousseau, 'Preface to Narcissus, or The Self-Admirer,' *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p. 143.
109 Rousseau, 'Letter to Volaire on Optimism' (1756), *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p. 113.
110 Rousseau, 'Letter to Voltair on Optimism' (1756), *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p. 113.

Rousseau believed that to view his ideal state and international confederation as impossible would be to allow man to sink into the quagmire of the status quo and to abdicate his responsibility to himself and to others. It would lead man to live forever as a tormented slave to his artificial passions. In *Emile* Rousseau wrote:

> Oh men! Is it my fault that you have made all good things difficult? I admit that I am aware of these difficulties; perhaps they are insuperable; but nevertheless it is certain that we do to some extent avoid them by trying to do so. I am showing what we should try to attain. I do not say we can attain it, but I do say that whoever comes nearest to it is nearest to success.[111]

Rousseau believed deeply in man's freedom. Just as man had been free to create the evil around him, he remains free to turn away from the evil toward the good. Rousseau viewed natural man as free in that he was not governed by instinct nor by the multitude of artificial passions that clamour within social man. When man left the state of nature and began to develop the relentless passions of interdependence he also developed reason and thus the facility to know the right, to suppress and direct his passions, and thus to reach for true freedom. Man can follow his enlightened reason and reach for true freedom (virtue), or he can follow his artificial passions and remain a slave. Rousseau saw the men of his times slaves. Yet he believed that they were still free to reach toward true freedom because they were born free not only as a species, but as individuals as well. As an individual each man can struggle towards true freedom. The very malleability that makes this struggle difficult, that allows a corrupt society to corrupt its members, also gives man hope. Each individual, as he struggles towards freedom, has both the ability and the responsibility to serve and influence his society. Rousseau wrote a letter to M. Philopolis in which he addressed his own responsibilities, as a wise man struggling towards virtue:

> How do you know that I would go and live in the woods?...Far from seeing anything like that in my work, you should have seen very strong reasons for not choosing that kind of life...The wise man today, if he is wise, will not go and look for happiness in the middle of a desert. Whenever possible you should make your home in your patrie, to love it and serve it.[112]

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111 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 59.
112 Rousseau, Letter to M. Philopolis (1755), *The Indispenable Rousseau*, p. 72.

Rousseau believed that when individuals strive toward virtue within a corrupt society an essential aspect of their quest is the efforts they make to serve and thus reform their society. In *Emile* Rousseau addressed himself to the education of the individual within the corrupt society and he counseled finally, at the end of the manuscript, that the individual educated to be virtuous must, as an enlightened adult, love his countrymen and live where he can "serve them to the best of [his] power."[113] Ultimately mankind as a whole cannot find virtue as a collection of individuals, not even as a collection of virtuous individuals. It would take just a single self seeker to end up getting the better of the others. Mankind can hope to achieve virtue only in law-governed civil states. Only in such states can each man function as one part of a greater whole, and in serving the whole serve both himself and others; only in such states can each man find the equality necessary to aid him in restraining his passions and ensure to him that the passions of others will also be restrained.

Even then Rousseau believed that politics would always be a difficult art because men would always possess a particular will. If men did not have different interests, Rousseau noted, "the common interest would scarcely be felt and would never meet with any obstacles; everything would go of itself, and politics would cease to be an art."[114] Because of the independent and physical aspect of man's nature politics will always be necessary. But if man did not have choices to make he would not truly possess freedom.

In *Emile* Rousseau noted that laws, even unjust laws, teach man:

> to fight against himself and to prevail, to sacrifice his own interest to the common weal. It is not true that he gains nothing from the laws; they give him courage to be just even in the midst of the wicked. It is not true that they have failed to make him free; they have taught him to rule himself.[115]

Rousseau argued that even within an unjust civil state man can begin to learn to act according to the common interest rather than his selfish interest. The evil man sees around

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113 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 438.
114 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 31.
115 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 437.

him can teach him to love the good. The flawed institutions he lives with have given him the opportunity to "perceive and hate their own iniquities".[116] Rousseau argued:

> it is only from the social order established among us that we derive ideas about the one we imagine ... and we do not really begin to become men until after we have been citizens.[117]

Thus man's conscience can develop and gain strength and man can begin to learn control even as he is faced with a multitude of new artificial passions to tempt him. Man's conscience, Rousseau argued, "is formed only by the habit of judging and feeling within society and according to its laws."[118] Even at his most corrupt social man will not loose his receptivity to the cries of his conscience. Rousseau noted:

> The social state which restrains all our natural inclinations cannot however extinguish them; in spite of our prejudices and in spite of ourselves, they still speak from the bottom of our hearts and often lead us back to the truth which we abandon for illusions.[119]

Those men who learn to restrain their passions and listen to their consciences must work toward inspiring or creating ever better legislation and thus teaching the people more self-control. The people, Rousseau noted, "must be taught to know what they require."[120] Gradually, over a period of generations, mankind can move toward virtue. Rousseau argued that it "is very certain that peoples become in time what the government shapes them to be."[121] He believed "everything is rooted in politics."[122] He wrote:

> Society must be studied in the individual and the individual in society; those who desire to treat politics and morals apart from one another will never understand either.[123]

Good social institutions, Rousseau argued in *Emile*, are those which most successfully move man away from his natural and independent physical nature. Good social

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116 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 437.
117 Rousseau, 'First Version of the Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 108.
118 Rousseau, 'First Version of the Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 108.
119 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 45.
120 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 41.
121 Rousseau, 'Discourse on Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 10.
122 Rousseau, *Confessions* Bk IX (London: Penguin Books, 1953), tran. J.M. Cohen, p. 377.
123 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 197.

institutions, he noted, "are those best fitted to make a man unnatural, to exchange his independence for dependence, to merge the unit in the group".[124]

Rousseau saw social man of his time as dependent on society in order to his satisfy artificial passions. This was the social man that Rousseau viewed as a slave, a slave to his passions who lived only for himself. When Rousseau argued that he wanted to make social man dependent he meant a different kind of dependence. Rousseau wanted to make social man truly only a part of the whole, "so that he no longer regards himself as one, but as a part of the whole, and is only conscious of the common life."[125] The way to do this, Rousseau argued in *Emile*, is to remove man's self-contradictions by freeing man from the dictatorship of his passions.[126] Although Rousseau believed that good laws would help man to harness his particular will, Rousseau did not believe that any laws could destroy man's passions.

Rousseau viewed passion as natural to man. He argued that to try to destroy man's passions would be "as absurd as it is useless."[127] Whoever has men to govern, Rousseau noted, "should not seek a perfection of which they are not capable."[128] Man's passions are the voice of his body and man is undeniably a physical as much as a spiritual creature. While man's original passion, his amour de soi, was transformed into selfishness in society Rousseau believed that it can yet be transformed into a positive force. He noted that "if men cannot be taught to love nothing, it is not impossible to instruct them to love one object before another, to love that which is truly beautiful to that which is deformed."[129] The object that Rousseau considered truly beautiful was the moral and collective body formed by the social compact.

In *The Social Contract* Rousseau argued that this moral and collective body is called

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124 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 7.
125 Rousseau, *Emile*, p 7.
126 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 9.
127 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 173.
128 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 20.
129 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 20.

a state when passive and a sovereign when active. The individuals composing it are called a people when taken collectively and citizens when taken individually. Each member of the sovereign, each man, has a general will as a citizen and a particular will as an individual.[130] Patriotism, Rousseau argued, leads men to view their person only as it forms a part of the state; patriotism leads them to view themselves as citizens rather than individuals.[131]

Rousseau believed that through patriotism social man can extend his self-love to others and thus transform it into a virtue. Channeled in the correct direction, Rousseau pointed out in *Discourse On Political Economy*, men's passions which give "rise to all our vices," can be transformed into "into a sublime virtue."[132] Men must come to love their country "with that exquisite sensibility which every independent being has only for itself".[133] Loving their country, according to Rousseau in his *Dedication to the Republic of Geneva*, is loving their fellow citizens, not loving the soil,[134] it is loving the moral and collective body that is the state, loving the laws dictated by the general will and the liberty that results. Only when men have become citizens through patriotism can they become men in the sense of realizing their duties toward humanity.

Rousseau argued that it is "one of the faults of our age to rely too much on cold reason, as if men were all mind."[135] He argued that reason without conscience cannot lead man toward virtue, and reason without passion cannot stimulate men to do anything great.[136] He pointed out that the "sole cause of our weakness is the feebleness of our will, and we have always the strength to perform what we strongly desire."[137] He concluded that man must come strongly, passionately, to desire the ideal state. While man's reason

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130 Rousseau,'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract & Discourses* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons LTD, 1961) trans. G.D.H. Dole, p. 13.
131 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 20.
132 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 21.
133 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 21.
134 Rousseau, 'Dedication To the Republic of Geneva,' *The Social Contract & Discourses*, p.144.
135 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 286.
136 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 286.
137 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 290.

can help him to see the flaws in his current state and envision the ideal state, it is his conscience which will lead him to desire the ideal state, and his passions, directed by patriotism, which can supply him with the tremendous energy and drive he needs to achieve it.

In *Considerations on the Government of Poland* Rousseau noted that patriotism will make men "do through preference and passion that which is never done sufficiently well when done only for duty or interest."[138] He argued that patriotism is the most heroic of all passions[139] because it can unite the energy of man's original passion, self-love, with the beauty of virtue.[140] Only patriotism, he pointed out, "can raise men above themselves, ... without which liberty is but an empty word, and laws but a chimera."[141] Thus patriotism must become the dominant passion of a people. To fill men with patriotism and stir them into striving toward the ideal state Rousseau wanted to rouse man's most powerful faculty, his imagination. Rousseau believed that man's imagination could give him the ability to surpass both his current restrictions and his inherent limitations. Imagination, Rousseau wrote:

> [A]wakes and precedes all the rest. It is imagination which enlarges the bounds of possibility for us, whether for good or ill, and therefore stimulates and feeds desires by the hope of satisfying them.[142]

All man's sufferings, Rousseau commented, "arise from the difference between the real and the imaginary."[143] He argued that man's imagination has determined the course of all man's passions.[144] "It is the errors of the imagination," he noted, which transmutes the passions into vices.[145] Rousseau wanted to fire man's imagination with images of virtue and the ideal state; he wanted to use man's imagination to redirect man's passions. In

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138 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 169.
139 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' p. 14.
140 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' p. 14.
141 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 191.
142 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 44.
143 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 45.
144 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 180.
145 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 180.

writing about virtue and the ideal state Rousseau attempted to show men what ought to be to allow them to judge what is and to excite their imagination and push them into striving beyond what is.

Thus the laws and education system of the civil state must be geared to help man redirect his passions. Man must be educated to view himself as only part of a greater whole. The individual must be educated to become a citizen. In *Considerations On the Government of Poland* Rousseau addressed this education in some detail:

> It is education that must give souls a national formation, and direct their opinions and tastes in such a way that they will be patriotic by inclination, by passion, by necessity. When first he opens his eyes, an infant ought to see the fatherland, and up to the day of his death he ought never to see anything else. Every true republican has drunk in love of country, that is to say, love of law and liberty, along with his mother's milk. This love is his whole existence; he sees nothing but the fatherland, he lives for it alone; when he is solitary, he is nothing; when he has ceased to have a fatherland, he no longer exists; and if he is not dead, he is worse than dead.[146]

In order to make patriotism into such a powerful passion, Rousseau argued, service to the state must replace talent and wealth as the primary source of public esteem. In his preface to *Narcissus* Rousseau argued that in the "well constituted state, the citizens are preferred to others ... only for their virtue."[147] The basis for comparison between citizens must be virtue in the form of patriotism. Patriotism must come to serve social man's vanity. In using social man's vanity, his corrupted self-love, rather than trying to destroy it Rousseau was trying to match the cure to the character of the disease. He argued that, "the great springs of human conduct come down to ... practically pure vanity."[148] He acknowledged that this vanity, this "universal desire of reputation, of honors, or preference"[149] would be next to impossible to eliminate even in the wise man or the ideal state. In his *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* Rousseau commented:

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146 Rousseau, 'Considerations On the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 172.
147 Rousseau, 'Preface to Narcissus, or The Self-Admirer,' p. 133.
148 Rousseau, 'Constitutional Project For Corsica,' *Political Writings* (London, 1953) ed. & trans. by F. Watkins, p. 325.
149 Rousseau, 'Discourse On the Origin of Inequality,' *The Social Contract and the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 241.

> A wise man does not go in chase of fortune, but he is by no means insensible to glory, and when he sees it so ill distributed, his virtue, which might have been animated by a little emulation, and turned to the advantage of society, droops and dies away in obscurity and indigence.[150]

Roussea saw vanity as an almost unavoidable characteristic of man's interdependence and although he never tired of lamenting over the ill effects of man's vanity, he also believed that it could be used as a positive force. Rousseau believed that social man's irrepressible need to compare himself to others could lead to virtue. In his second *Discourse* Rousseau wrote:

> I could show that it is to this itch of being spoken of, to this fury of distinguishing ourselves which seldom or never gives us a moment's respite, that we owe both the best and the worst things among us, our virtues and our vices ...[151]

In directing patriotism to the service of social man's vanity Rousseau accomplished two ends. First patriotism gains its force through its ability to satisfy social man's vanity. Second the negative aspects of social man's vanity are mitigated because it is satisfied through service to other men rather than at their expense. Individuals promote their own interest in promoting the public interest. Therefore in Rousseau's ideal state institutions must be constructed in such a way that the vanity of social man will be gratified through patriotism. In *Considerations on the Government of Poland* Rousseau wrote:

> Whoever concerns himself with the problem of creating institutions for a people ought to know how to direct opinion, and thus to govern the passions of men.[152]

In order to allow public esteem to be won through patriotism rather than wealth Rousseau believed that the citizens must be deprived of the opportunity of growing either wealthy or poor.[153] "As long as long as luxury reigns among the great," Rousseau wrote, "cupidity will reign in all hearts."[154] He added:

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150 Rousseau, 'Discourse On the Arts and Sciences,' *The Social Contract and Discourses*, p. 138.
151 Rousseau, 'Discourse On the Origin of Inequality,' *The Social Contract and the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 241.
152 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 172.
153 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 19.
154 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 171.

> The object of public admiration and the desires of private individuals will always be the same, and if one must be rich in order to shine, to be rich will always be the dominant passion.[155]

Rousseau suggested taxing objects of "luxury, amusement, and idleness"[156] for government revenue. Then taxes become more than the "mere object of finances," they become "useful regulations of policy."[157]

The International System

Only the same passion that can inspire man to work toward the realization of the ideal state can inspire man to work toward the realization of the binding international confederation. Rousseau did not believe that reason alone could move man to adopt a binding international confederation any more than he believed that reason alone could bring man to construct an ideal state. As I pointed out earlier in this thesis Rousseau wrote two essays on a binding international confederation. In his first essay he summarized the Abbe de Saint-Pierre's *Project for Perpetual Peace*. He discussed this summary in his memoirs, the *Confessions*, noting that he had originally planned to use it to slip in "many important truths ... under the cloak of the Abbe de Saint-Pierre."[158] He noted, however, that he had changed his mind after studying Saint-Pierre's writings more closely. He stated, still in the *Confessions*, that Saint-Pierre had underestimated the strength of man's artificial passions and had failed to see that man's apparent interests generated by these passions blind him to his real interests. In light of Saint-Pierre's error Rousseau decided to separate his own views on the international system from those of Saint-Pierre. He decided to give Saint-Pierre's views in a *Summary* of Saint-Pierre's work, and to give his own views in a subsequent *Critique* of the same work.[159]

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155 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 171.
156 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 31.
157 Rousseau, 'Discourse On Political Economy,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 30-31.
158 Rousseau, *Confessions*, p. 380.
159 Rousseau, *Confessions*, p. 393.

Rousseau described the political structure of Saint-Pierre's confederation in his *Summary* and, as I pointed out earlier, did not criticize this political structure in his *Critique*. On the contrary, Rousseau argued in the *Critique*, "the project was very wise."[160] It would convert "the free and voluntary association" that united the states into a "genuine body politic."[161] The political structure of Saint-Pierre's confederation would be much like Rousseau's ideal state; both would be law governed political societies. Although Rousseau did not elaborate on it in his *Summary*, as a political society the international confederation, like the ideal state, would have a general will.

In his *Political Economy*, written the year before the *Summary* and the *Critique*, Rousseau argued that each state has a general will with respect to its members and a particular will with respect to other states. He added however that in its interrelations with other states, each state becomes part of a larger body politic that has a general will of its own,[162] a sort of world general will. This general will results from the ability of each member of the larger body politic to act for the good of the whole. To realize this, or any general will, Rousseau believed that the relationship between the members of the political society must be governed by a convention that includes binding laws. There can be no justice without laws. The states of Rousseau's Europe were racked with strife because they had moved into interdependence without the guidance of laws. To resolve their strife therefore, they must become part of a law-governed political society and thus realize their general will.

For Rousseau this much was relatively simple. His problem was with the initial creation of this law-governed society and he led the reader directly into this problem in his last statement of the *Summary*. In this statement he wrote:

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160 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 225.
161 Rousseau, 'Abstract of Saint-Pierre's Project,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 67.
162 Rousseau, 'Political Economy,' *The Miscellaneous Works of Mr. J.J. Rousseau*, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), II p. 8.

> If ... the project remains unfulfilled, it is not therefore because it is too idealistic; rather, it is because men are insane and because it is a sort of folly to remain wise in the midst of those who are mad.[163]

This final statement in the *Summary* essentially condenses Rousseau's entire critique of Saint-Pierre's proposal into one sentence. Rousseau defined what he meant by "mad" many times in his writings. In *Emile* he stated it succinctly: "The maddest of men" is the "man who has his senses least under control."[164] Saint-Pierre was one man who had the "folly to remain wise in midst of those who are mad."[165] In his *Confessions* Rousseau described Saint-Pierre as dominated by one idea from which he could never escape, the idea that it is enlightened reason rather than passions that motivate men. Rousseau wrote:

> The high opinion [Saint-Pierre] had of modern learning had led him into adopting a false belief in perfect wisdom which was the basis of all the institutions he proposed and the source of all his political sophistries. This rare man, an ornament to his age and to his kind - the only man, perhaps, in all the history of the human race whose only passion was the passion for reason - nevertheless only advanced from error to error in all his systems, because he wished to make all men like himself instead of taking them as they are.[166]

The fallacy that Saint-Pierre's folly led him into, Rousseau commented, is the assumption that men, in spite of their selfish passions, are "rational enough to perceive what is useful to them."[167] Rousseau did not believe that the men of his time were rational enough to perceive what is useful to them. Rousseau believed that Saint-Pierre, although he did portray men as "unjust, greedy, and looking to their own self-interest above all,"[168] failed to understand that men are blinded by the strength of their artificial and selfish passions. Thus Saint-Pierre failed to understand that men of his time were not even able to see their real interests much less act on them. Saint-Pierre could not see that such men are driven to pursue their apparent interests, those interests sparked by their artificial and selfish passions, rather than their real interests dictated by enlightened reason.

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163 Rousseau, 'Summary,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 220.
164 Rousseau, *Emile*, p. 289-290.
165 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 225.
166 Rousseau, *Confessions*, p. 393.
167 Rousseau, 'Summary,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 220.
168 Rousseau, 'Summary,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 220.

Men are mad, Rousseau lamented, and the princes and ministers of states, as men, are possessed by the same madness. They are possessed by the same passions, the same competitive drive as other social men, the drive to place self above all others. In these princes and ministers this drive is translated into a quest for wealth and power through conquest. Thus, Rousseau argued, these princes and ministers prefer the international state of war in the hope of extending their dominance outside their borders and making it more absolute within.[169] The international state of war is caused by the anarchical structure of the international system, the political structure of the states within the international system, the character of the social man within the civil states, and the interrelationships of all three.

Rousseau concluded that given the conditions of his time it would likely be impossible to put Saint Pierre's proposal into practice. He argued that it would require:

> a convergence of wisdom among so many different minds and a convergence of aims among so many different interests that one could hardly hope to get the happy agreement of all these necessary circumstances simply by chance. The only way to make up for the failure of this agreement to come about by chance would be to make it come about by force.[170]

If this agreement must be brought about by force, Rousseau concluded, it "would perhaps cause more harm in one moment than it could prevent for centuries to come."[171]

If we choose to accept this statement from Rousseau's *Critique* in isolation from the rest of his *Critique* and the rest of his work, we are left with a terribly depressing view of the world. We are left with the conclusion that the binding international confederation is impossible and thus the civil state will not only remain unjust, it will become ever more unjust over time.

But Rousseau never meant us to come to the above conclusion. He exhibited neither the narrow-minded pessimism nor the lack of imagination and foresight that would

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169 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 222.
170 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 225.
171 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 229.

have led him to assume the conditions of his time would remain in place indefinitely. He believed passionately that the future could not be limited by the present. He did not wish to portray man as torn forever in unresolvable contradiction, torn between the self-centered independence dictated by the physical aspect of his nature and the selfless morality dictated by the spiritual aspect of his nature. Instead, Rousseau believed that while man's passions had gotten him into the miserable state he was in during the eighteenth century, man's passions could also be harnessed to pull him away from his misery towards a just society. Rousseau believed that with ardent and sustained passion man retains the capacity to overcome great obstacles. In the *Critique* Rousseau argued that the binding international confederation could not be viewed as "mere fantasy."[172] He argued only that "under present circumstance" it is a "ridiculous enough" project. He added however that under different circumstances, circumstances such as those facing Henry IV and Sully, a binding international confederation could "become once more a reasonable proposal."[173] He did not assume it would be easy "to find a favorable moment" to set Saint-Pierre's proposal in motion[174] but he believed passionately that man can and must work toward creating such a moment. He tried to inspire man to work toward both an ideal civil state and a binding international confederation.

In the first version of *The Social Contract* Rousseau pointed out that in working toward the ideal social contract man must remember that "there is scarcely any man or people who will not listen to reason at some better period and some moment of his life."[175] In the *State of War* Rousseau noted that:

> in spite of our prejudices and in spite of ourselves, [our natural inclinations] still speak from the bottom of our hearts and often lead us back to the truth which we abandon for illusions.[176]

All of Rousseau's work is permeated by the belief that man is free. Man, as an

172 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 225.
173 Rousseau, 'Judgement of Saint-Pierre's Project,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 100.
174 Rousseau, 'Critique,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*, p. 224.
175 Rousseau, 'First Version of the Social Contract,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 128.
176 Rousseau, 'The State of War,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p.45.

individual, as a member of a state, and as a member of humanity, has the freedom to work toward setting Saint-Pierre's proposal in motion and ultimately to achieve its realization. But man must first come to passionately desire the realization of the proposal. Over and over Rousseau advised that man cannot eliminate his passions therefore he must learn to harness them. Man cannot achieve great heights through reason alone.

It is through man's patriotism within the state that his passions can come to direct him toward a binding international confederation. Rousseau believed that it is in the real interest of each man and each state to form a binding international confederation. Rousseau did not view patriotism as an exclusive sentiment. He did not believe that in order to love his state man must hate humanity. In fact, Rousseau argued, as citizens become more and more guided by their patriotism they become less and less warlike, or at least less offensively warlike. When he counseled in *Considerations on the Government of Poland* that Poland cultivate patriotism, he advocated that the Polish revive "a warlike spirit devoid of ambition."[177] Patriotism, Rousseau noted, leads to liberty which "deprives a people of offensive power."[178]

Rousseau's conception of patriotism fits within the concept of civil religion that he developed in the *Social Contract*. Rousseau argued that the dogma of man's religion must concern the State:

> [I]t matters very much to the community that each citizen should have a religion. That will make him love his duty; but the dogmas of that religion concern the State and its members only so far as they have reference to morality and to the duties which he who professes them is bound to do to others. Each man may have, over and above, what opinions he pleases, without its being the Sovereign's business to take cognizance them ...[179]

Rousseau listed the positive and negative dogmas of his proposed civil religion. The positive dogmas include the existence of a "mighty, intelligent, and beneficent Divinity, possessed of foresight and providence," a life beyond death for the soul, happiness of the

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177 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 176.
178 Rousseau, 'Considerations on the Government of Poland,' *Rousseau on International Relations*, p. 194.
179 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract & Discourses*, p. 114.

just, punishment of the wicked, and the sanctity of the social contract and the laws.[180] He listed only one negative doctrine, intolerance. He argued that civil intolerance cannot be separated from theological intolerance and that it is "impossible to live at peace with those we regard as damned ... we must either reclaim or torment them."[181] In all his work Rousseau condemned intolerance. In developing his conception of patriotism, therefore, he did not only attempt to restrain man's greed and ambition, he also tried to stimulate tolerance rather than intolerance. His conception of patriotism was consistent with the idea of peace within and between states rather than war.

Guided by patriotism, working passionately to fulfill the real interest of their state, Rousseau believed that the people will work through their government toward a binding international confederation. Reform of the international system is possible according to the nature of things. It must come about from within three levels, the individual, the state, and the international system and from the interaction of these three levels.

Although at times Rousseau uttered dramatic statements which seemed to preclude any hope of progress in fact his work is permeated with the belief that man's political consciousness must develop slowly, in an evolutionary way. In his *Dedication to the Republic of Geneva* for example, Rousseau noted:

> Peoples once accustomed to masters are not in a condition to do without them. If they attempt to shake off the yoke they still more estrange themselves from freedom.[182]

However, he continued in the same paragraph to discuss this statement in the context of the Roman people. He wrote:

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180 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract & Discourses*, p. 114.
181 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract & Discourses*, p. 114.
182 Rousseau, 'Dedication To The Republic Of Geneva,' *The Social Contract & Discourses*, p. 145.

> The Roman people itself, a model for all free peoples, was wholly incapable of governing itself when it escaped from the oppression of the Tarquins. Debased by slavery, and the ignominious tasks which had been imposed upon it, it was at first no better than a stupid mob, which it was necessary to control and govern with the greatest wisdom; in order that, being accustomed by degrees to breathe the health-giving air of liberty, minds which had been enervated or rather brutalized under tyranny, might gradually acquire that severity of morals and spirit of fortitude which made it at length the people of all most worthy of respect.[183]

In his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Rousseau discussed man's political development in great depth. He described how man evolves from a simple and independent creature living within a state of nature into a complex and interdependent creature living within a civil society. He argued that in order to create a large and general society man must first create small civil societies. Only then, can the "convenient polity and good order of a small state" be combined with the "external power of a great nation" through confederations.[184] Rousseau's belief that political development is a gradual process is also apparent in his discussion of the political development of the Europeans; he described them as evolving from men "barbarous and unknown to one another,"[185] into civil societies, and finally into a society of nations, a "real society ... from which no single nation composing it could withdraw without immediately causing problems for the others."[186] He saw the logical next step for Europe as the binding international confederation. Political societies, civil states or international confederations, Rousseau stressed, are conventions, the work of man not nature. They have been created by men and thus may be altered by men.

When men first became aware of their need of a law-governed civil society, Rousseau argued, it was so that the wealthy could protect what they had. Essentially the first social contract was a brilliant plot in which the rich deceived the poor in order to formalize their possessions at the expense of the poor. This deception was really little different from the plot discussed and applauded by Rousseau in his *Critique* in which

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183 Rousseau, 'Dedication To The Republic Of Geneva,' *The Social Contract & Discourses*, p.145-146.
184 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 101.
185 Rousseau, 'Summary,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*.
186 Rousseau, 'Summary,' *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age*.

Henry the IV planned to create a federation of Europe. Henry the IV did not appeal to the common interest of the European monarchs; instead, he showed each European monarch how a binding confederation would serve his own individual and apparent interest. Even Henry himself, Rousseau noted, was guided by his individual and apparent interest. He stood to gain more by the treaty then the other monarchs because in reducing the power of the Hapsburgs he was increasing his own relative power. This confederation would not have been capable of just laws and so it must be compared to the unjust civil state man entered into after leaving the state of nature. It would have been only one more step in man's political evolution. Man would still need to work toward reforming the laws of both the civil states and the international confederation because the laws formed through man's particular will cannot be just. Man's political evolution has faced many obstacles in the past and will continue to face more in the future. Rousseau believed man must continue to strive to overcome these obstacles and move forward.

-VII-

CONCLUSION

Rousseau was a dynamic and critical thinker. He did not intend men to use his works to emphasize the limitations of mankind but the potentialities, the pursuit of virtue. But he did not see man as being led by his developing reason on a straight and unobstructed path toward virtue. He criticized Saint-Pierre in that Saint-Pierre believed:

> human reason would always go on being improved; he expected each century to add its enlightenment to that of the previous centuries. He did not see that human understanding always has the same scope, and a very narrow one. It loses on one side as much as it gains on another; prejudices constantly being renewed take away from us as much acquired enlightenment as cultivated reason can replace...[187]

Rousseau passionately believed that reason alone can never lead man out of the turmoil he lives in either as a citizen of an unjust state, or as a state in an anarchic international system. Rousseau believed that man must learn to place his reason at the service of his conscience and his passions at the service of his enlightened reason.

Rousseau believed that neither the physical and independent aspect of man's nature nor the social and moral aspect could completely subsume the other, but he believed that they could achieve a more peaceful resolution. He believed that man can only hope to approach this resolution within an ideal state in a binding international confederation. Thus, he argued reform is necessary at three levels, the level of the individual, the level of the state, and the level of the international system; reform at any one level alone, he noted, would be both transient and insufficient.

Therefore unlike the realists Rousseau demanded that man continue to strive for perfection. He noted that "if it is good to know how to employ men as they are, it is much better to make them as they should be."[188] Rousseau developed his understanding of how

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187 Rousseau, 'Letter to Mirabeau (26 July 1767)', *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p. 279.
188 Rousseau, 'Discourse on Political Economy,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 11.

man should be from his understanding of the nature of things. In regard to Saint-Pierre's proposal he noted:

> [I]t is our business to ask whether, in the nature of the case, the enterprise is possible or not ... Confining ourselves, as we do, to incontestable principles, we have no call to satisfy every reader, nor to solve every objection, nor to say how every detail will be settled. It is enough to show that a settlement is possible.[189]

Rousseau wrote about principles, "incontestable principles" as he put it, and he argued that he remained true to these principles throughout his career. In response to the condemnation of *Emile* he published a letter to Christophe de Beaumont, the Archbishop of Paris in which he defended both *Emile* and his life's work. He began:

> I have written on various subjects, but always with the same principles, the same morality, the same faith, the same maxims and, if you will, the same opinions.[190]

In *Julie* Rousseau argued that the "greatest defect in human wisdom" is excessive confidence, which leads us to judge the future by the present. Instead of limiting the future with the present Rousseau attempted to use the possibilities held by the future to change and expand the present. Rousseau must be understood, not only as a dynamic and critical thinker, but as a passionately moral thinker.

Just as it is incorrect to argue that Rousseau can be labeled as a "pessimist" in the deterministic tradition of realist thinkers, it is equally incorrect to argue that he can be pegged as an optimist in the tradition of the idealist thinkers. Rousseau never averted his eyes from the difficulties that stood in the way of success; rather he pointed them out and admonished man to try to surmount them.

Throughout his life Rousseau felt driven to discover the truth. He defined the truth as a pure idea that is only approximated by the image or material object it creates.[191] He believed that as the image moves closer to the pure idea, man moves closer to the truth. He believed that the two aspects of man's nature, the physical and independent aspect and

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189 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Profect for Peace,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 71.
190 Rousseau, 'Letter to Christophe de Beaumont (1763,) *The Indispensable Rousseau*, p.231.
191 Rousseau, 'On Theatrical Imitation,' *Miscellaneous Works of J.J. Rousseau*, II.

the social and moral aspect, could be resolved only in the civil state. He tried to show man his social and moral nature and the principles of political organization, both nationally and internationally, in which he believed man could fulfill this nature within the limits prescribed by his independent and physical nature. He wrote in the hope that man would actively work toward these principles of political organization. He acknowledged however that man will only ever be able to approximate both the principles of political organization and virtue because both are, after all, ideas, and to materialize them would be necessarily to alter them. However Rousseau believed that if man passionately wanted to, he could move much closer to the ideas. He argued:

> The limits of the possible in moral things are less narrow than we think; it is our weaknesses, our vices, our prejudices, that contract them.[192]

Therefore although Rousseau believed "the realization of the good invariably falls short of the ideal"[193] he spent his life writing about the ideal. He believed that according to the nature of things the ideal is possible, and he believed that how close man comes to attaining the ideal is very much dependent on how badly man wants to attain it.

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192 Rousseau, 'The Social Contract,' *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, p. 94.
193 Rousseau, 'Saint-Pierre's Project for Peace,' *Rousseau On International Relations*, p. 55.

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